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ABSTRACT

A sociolinguistic analysis of texts is advocated for expanding an oral interpreter's creation of an event from written texts. Two studies are reviewed that suggest that language choices are related to the speaker's purpose, thought processes, role, cultural expectations, and sex. The specific area of study suggested as highly useful for interpretation analysis is the investigation of speaker purpose, or in sociolinguistic terms, functions that refer to the ways an act of speech operates to accomplish a goal for the speaker. A diagram compares three function categories common in speech situations. S. Ervin-Tripp's categories of conversational openings and their corresponding functions are suggested for use when analyzing poetry. It is also suggested that viewing a literary selection as a series of speech acts and identifying the associated functions assists the performer in several ways. One result of functional analysis of dialogue is said to be a greater understanding of forces operating between characters that will help release the performer's behavior. (MKM)

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

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Sociolinguistic Analysis of Texts

Sociolinguistic research has advanced the understanding of language use in ordinary communication settings. Sociolinguists investigate speakers' language behavior as it co-occurs with factors of situation, context, culture, cognition, and purpose. Because of the emphasis upon interaction among speaker, language, and social influences, the findings of these researchers can be beneficial in developing analytical methods for performers of literary speakers. with a view of the text as language behavior and as a speech act sequence. This paper will present some of the potentials in language behavior study for expanding an interpreters'creation of an event from a written text.

The type of analysis proposed here is based upon the assumption that a view of literary text as social and linguistic behavior is justifiable, supported in part by the interpreter's traditional concern with the dramatic analysis of the speaker. Don Geiger has said, in reference to poetry: "we must ask such questions as 'what is the content of a speaker's utterance? Why does he utter it? What does he mean?'"[1] J.R. Firth points out that the "real" or ordinary speaker is himself a "bundle of personae" with appropriate lines.[2] Other linguists can be cited who see profit in investigating written literature as speech samples.[3] It is not necessary to allow the obvious differences between literary and ordinary speaking to obscure the significant behavioral similarities. Note the statement Robert Breen makes on dramatizing the style of a narrative text in chamber theatre: "the narrator is able to employ vocal inflections and nonverbal gestures which are inferred from the general laws of human personality and the social matrix which is the cultural model for us all."[4]

It is my theory that a sociolinguistic analysis of a written text helps to release the performer's behavior and assists the transformation of

written language to enacted speech.

The underlying view of sociolinguistic study is that there are possibilities of choice in what is said and how something is said in a situation.[5] To locate the pattern in co-occurence of speech choices and social factors becomes the investigative goal for a wide variety of field, experimental, and ethnographic studies. Focus may be on a region, a nation, a social group, a type of situation, an ethnic group, etc. The speech behaviors examined may be specific ard limited syntactic or phonetic behaviors, encoding styles, tones, of voice, purposes, sequencing traits, or others.

Some studies examine the interaction of the speaker's sex with the cultural expectations of the setting as an influence upon the patterns of language choices. Two of these will serve to illustrate some of the kinds of information found in sociolinguistic research. The first is a field study conducted in a Madagascar hamlet.[6] In this particular culture, researchers discovered that the culture considers as an ideal style of speaking that which is "indirect" where even disagreement, criticism, and insult are to be done in proverb, metaphor, poetry, saying, verbal niceties, and passive voice. However, the indirect style is only expected of men; women are the ones whose style directly confronts the listener in expressing anger or criticism. Men who need to present unpleasant information work through women as the mediators. Men are the formal speechmakers; women handle everyday interactions.[7] Language choices of these speakers are connected to expectations of the cultural context; a speaker departing from the norm may signal something unusual in the speaker experience or the situation. Of interest to interpretation research is the relationship this indicates between the style of the language being used, the social norms as they restrict the speaker as he is talking, and the goals of the speaker in the setting.

Another study, of an experimental nature rather than a field project, was conducted by Marion Wood to investigate communicative behaviors, comparing males and females, in a task oriented group.[8] A primary focus was the relationship between speaker sex and the language characteristics used to accomplish the task. The results were that male utterances correlated with an empirical style and with performance of evaluation, analysis, or clarification. On the other hand, female utterances correlated with an interpretive, creative style based on associations. One of the subjects' tasks was to describe a photograph; sample quotations of subjects' responses indicate the different styles that emerged related to sex. The following is a male response:

> . . . he's looking upward towards the lefthand corner of the picture and his once again right eyebrow is raised a little bit more than his left eyebrow. [9]

The experimenter points out that references are to observable features in the photograph, in contrast to features of female utterances represented by the following sample:

> . . . he could be looking at something that's above him also I think well if he was outdoors he could be looking up in a tree at a bird . . .[10]

Female responses contained such creative extensions of the observable details and some personal interpretations were common.

The findings of both of these studies emphasize that language choices are related to the speaker's purposes and thought process, the speaker's conscious or unconscious perception of his/her role, cultural expectations, and on some occasions, the speaker's sex. The language variations pinpointed in both of these studies can form a part of analytical approaches to any speaker's behavior, whether the variation seems related to sex or to another factor of the situation.

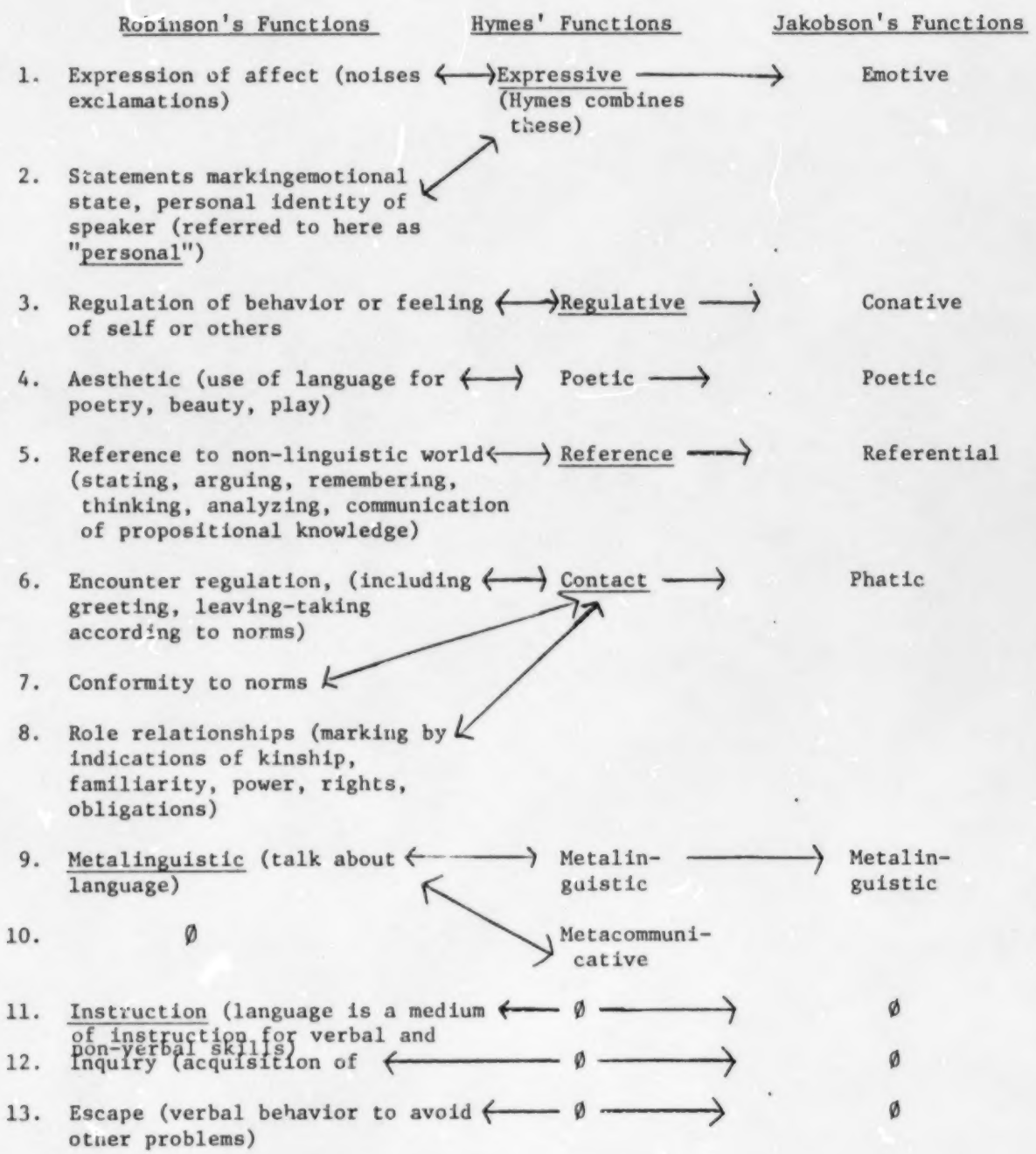
The specific area of study which is emphasized in this paper as highly

useful for interpretation analysis is the investigation of speaker purpose, or in sociolinguistic terms, "functions." Both the studies just discussed hinge upon this component of a speaking occasion. "Functions" refer to the ways an act of speech operates to accomplish a goal for the speaker. Several researchers have identified sets of functions common in speech situations. The diagram on page five compares the function categories as described by three sociolinguists. Types of functions include, according to Roman Jakobson's categories listed on the right of the diagram: emotive, conative, poetic, referential, phatic, and metalinguistic. A speech act may function, respectively, to express personal feelings, to regulate behavior, to play with language, to establish interpersonal contact, to convey analysis, description, and information, or to comment on channels of communication. W.P. Robinson's system includes twelve function categories and contains several observations parallel to Jakobson's. Some of Robinson's types are subdivisions of Jakobson's seven categories.

One speech act can include more than one function; the same word, phrase, or statement can carry a variety of underlying functions in different contexts. In the case of the sex-related speaking traits previously discussed, functional variations were found. Women in the experimental task group were observed to use personal functions along with referential functions, while men most commonly used referential functions only in describing the picture. In the Madagascar study, women employed a style that accomplished regulatory functions while men were more concerned with contact functions. Functions affected style, and speakers' choices were connected to social expectations.

To view a literary selection as a series of speech acts and to identify the associated functions assists the performer in several ways. Functions are accompanied by muscular and mental states. There is a direct link between the

Function Types Found in Ordinary Speech



function of the speech act, the accompanying bodily states, the expected reactions of the persons addressed, and the speaker's facial and vocal expressions.

Each person, due to years of experience in his/her culture, has memory of functional behaviors. Research into nonverbal communication indicates that people can imagine conversations, predict what will be said and how it will be said, and predict how people will respond.[14] Performers discovering functions in text analysis can remember or imagine experiences of regulating behavior, establishing contact, expressing emotions, etc. They can imagine possible responses of listeners. Given an analytical framework which focuses upon everyday and ordinary speaking experiences, the interpreter can improve transfer of text analysis to text enactment.

There is a study of function by a sociolinguist which directly provides insight to poetry analysis. Susan Ervin-Tripp examined the types of functional occurences at openings of conversations. She found six recurrent openings:

Ervin-Tripp's Categories of Openings and Corresponding Functions

Openings	Functions
1. Request for information, goods, services	Inquiry or Regulatory
2. Request for social response	Contact
3. Offer of information	Referential
4. Emotional expressions	Expressive and Personal
5. Stereotyped statements	Contact
6. Substitute statements to divert away from another less desirable activity [15]	Escape

Opening speech acts in poems are crucial points just as conversational openings are important to introducing ordinary exchanges. When 103 poems by a single author were examined,[16] analyzing functions of beginning utterances, the results were:

Openings in Poems: Types and Number

Referential	56
Personal	26
Aesthetic	14
Regulatory	4
Inquiry	1
Expressive	2

Five of the six functions found in the poems' openings compared to types discovered in actual conversational openings. Fourteen "aesthetic" openings were found in the poems, but in conversations studied by Ervin-Tripp, this type was not observed.

The opening of a poem requires from a performer the establishment of tone, persona, setting, perspective, and questions or problems which will shape the entire poem. Increased understanding of the initial speech act and its connection to the context can be achieved through examination of functions and their associated mental, emotional and bodily states.

At fulcrum points in poems, functional analysis can be applied to understand more of that moment where a speaker may undergo a significant change in attitudinal direction. A shift from one function to another at a fulcrum point is connected to shifts in emotion, focus, discovery, thought, etc. In fact, the interpreter benefits from examining functional shifts throughout the sequence of the entire poem. Studies of speech act sequences in ordinary speaking situations have included, for example, the analysis of the series of functions and routines involved in telling a joke.[17] The significance of the connections between speaker goals, context, culture, and linguistic habit is apparent.

Although it can be of interest to see the patterns in language behavior that recur in a particular author's work, the major benefit of applying the socio-

linguistic function framework to literature is the releasing of behavior that accompanies understanding a speaker's purpose from moment to moment in individual poems. In this author's classroom uses of functional analysis, students have been assigned to trace function sequences in poems and also to analyze functional interactions in dialogue.

One result of functional analysis of dialogue is greater understanding of forces operating between characters. And, the performer can locate sources of tension created when characters pretend to pursue a function while intending to accomplish another. Disharmony between characters can be understood as revealed due to conflicting functions in the interchange. A character's discomfort or stress may be related to unexpected or inappropriate functional choices.

Accompanying functional variations in speech are choices in language style, as was evident in the studies comparing male and female utterances. The sociolinguist has identified stylistic traits occuring in relation to context that can expand traditional literary analysis. Attention to these can bring analysis of style into the realm of oral speech behavior. Some of the language behaviors that have been identified which are helpful to interpretation analysis include: foregrounding,[18] linguistic routines,[19] metaphorical switching,[20] elaborated or restricted codes,[21] repetitions,[22] fragments, and nonfluencies. All of these noted variations in speech, found to occur in actual situations, can also be discovered in poetry as integrated with the speaker's function sequence, and therefore his experience.

Traditional linguistic and stylistic analyses are also broadened when typically noted literary characteristics, such as metaphors, are analyzed in relation to function, cultural norms, the speech event, the speaker's situation, and the speaker's linguistic and communicative competence.

By formulating analytical methods for texts based on sociolinguistic findings and frameworks, performers possess additional tools to make discoveries about characters' or speakers' language which are directly tied to experiences and behavior, leading to more thorough enactment of the text.

Footnotes

[1] Don Geiger, The Dramatic Impulse in Modern Poetics (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1967) p. 21.

[2] J. R. Firth, Papers in Linguistics (London: Oxford University Press, 1957) p. 184.

[3] Raymond Chapman, Linguistics and Literature (Tatowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1973), p. 74; Jan Mukarovsky, "Standard Language and Poetic Language," A Prague School Reader on Esthetic, Literary Structure, and Style, trans. Paul Garvin (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964), p. 27; Paul Goodman, Speaking and Language: In Defense of Poetry (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 227; Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistic and Poetics," Style in Language, ed. Thomas Sebeok (New York: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960), pp. 353, 356.

[4] Robert Breen, Chamber Theatre (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 39.

[5] Dell Hymes, The Foundations of Sociolinguistics (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974) p. 153.

[6] Elinor Keenan, "Norm Makers, Norm Breakers: Uses of speech by Men and Women in a Malagasy Community," pp. 125-142 in Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking, eds. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

[7] Keenan, pp. 125-142.

[8] Marion Wood, "The Influence of Sex and Knowledge of Communication Effectiveness on Spontaneous Speech," Word 22, 1966, pp. 112-137.

[9] Wood, p. 128.

[10] Wood, p. 128.

[11] W. P. Robinson, Language and Social Behavior (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972) pp. 50-51.

[12] Dell Hymes, p. 23.

[13] Roman Jakobson, Main Trends in the Science of Language (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 44.

[14] Albert Schelflen, How Behavior Means (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1974), p. 46.

[15] Susan Ervin-Tripp, "Interaction of Language, Topic, and Listener," American Anthropologist 66 (December, 1964), pp. 86-102.

16 Phyllis Scott, An Interpreter's Approach to the Language Behavior of Literary Speakers: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Joyce Carol Oates' Poetry, unpublished dissertation, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 1976. p. 72.

17 Harvey Sacks, "An Analysis of the Course of a Joke's Telling in Conversation" pp. 337-353 in Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking, eds. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

18 Bohuslav Havranek, "The Functional Differentiation of the Standard Language," A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style, trans. Paul Garvin (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964), p. 10.

19 Karl Reisman, "Contrapuntal Conversations in an Antiguan Village," Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking, eds. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 111.

20 Joshua Fishman, Language in Sociocultural Change (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 6.

21 Basil Bernstein, "Social Class,Language, and Socialization," Class, Codes, and Control II (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1973), pp. 175-176.

22 Chapman, p. 180.

23 Scott, pp. 100-141.